

Business License Information Center (BLIC)
Department of Economic Development
Executive Summary
Presented to IOWAccess Advisory Council
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Project Sponsor: Iowa Business and Regulatory Assistance Network

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Goal: The goal of this project is to enhance the existing on-line Business License Information Center (BLIC) by establishing an electronic, online business portal that provides timely, accurate and comprehensive access to compliance information and requirements and resources to conduct business in Iowa.

Project Purpose: To plan and implement enhancements to the on-line business License Information Center (BLIC) to enable:

1. The business user and entrepreneur to accurately and quickly search and identify their business compliance requirement and resources across the state government enterprise, and to successfully navigate and link to regulatory agency web sites..
2. 24/7 access to information that is accurate, timely and comprehensive.

Background: Iowa Code section 15E.17 provides that the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) is responsible for providing resources to enable a person interested in establishing a commercial facility or engaging in a commercial activity to obtain information about of any registration, license, or other approval of a state regulatory agency that is required for the activity under Iowa law. In turn, agencies which administer these regulatory requirements are required to keep IDED informed of them and to update that information as needed.

Since 1997, the Business License Information has served as the Iowa gateway to information on the numerous licensing, certification, and permitting requirements that apply to business activities in the State of Iowa. When it was developed, BLIC represented a major innovation in the application of technology to enhance access to information which often is elusive and confusing to persons doing business in Iowa. However, by today's standards, BLIC's interface and organization are confusing and difficult to use, as they do not reflect innovations which have been developed in electronic, web-based delivery of information since BLIC's design was implemented. If BLIC is to realize its full potential to simplify and shorten the task of locating licensing and permitting information for users, it is time to incorporate new technologies.

Expected Results:

- ▶ **Make Iowa more competitive**
- ▶ **Enhance service to existing and prospective business**
- ▶ **Reduce unnecessary regulatory delays**
- ▶ **Reduce costs of compliance**
- ▶ **Increase business focus on core activities rather than compliance**
- ▶ **Increase compliance rates**

14. IDED Executive Summary Business License Information Center.doc

Improving accessibility of regulatory information will enhance the ability of business to operate efficiently in Iowa, but the services provided by BLIC may be especially important to small and medium sized businesses, whose resources to independently develop information about the complexities of regulatory compliance are limited.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) reports that ***“entrepreneurs, innovators, and small business are key players in the economy in Iowa. They make up most of the employer firms in the state and their contribution is indispensable,”*** and they are an expanding sector in Iowa: According to 2004 U.S. Census data reports that Iowa small business payroll was \$17.7 billion; a five percent increase from the prior year. The Business License Information Center responds to about 300 calls a months from business seeking assistance and direction. Providing ready access to regulatory information frees up business resources to concentrate on their core business activities. This access is also likely to enhance regulatory compliance as both requirements and resources are identified early in the business and project planning cycle.

Request: This is a request for funding for the Design phase of the project of \$25,000.

Cost Avoidance: An enhanced BLIC system will reduce staff hours required to process applications for requests for information, reduce printing, mailing and postage expense, and decrease paperwork for the state.

Interested Parties: Parties interested in this project include the following:

Iowa business and entrepreneurs;

Businesses seeking to locate in Iowa

Iowa Regulatory and Business Assistance Network (including representatives of major regulatory agencies of state government)

Some of the Recipients of this Service:

Iowa Business and entrepreneurs

Prospective businesses seeking to locate in Iowa